

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 09724 061723Z

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 MC-02 SAJ-01 OMB-01 DRC-01 /159 W

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R 061520Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1991

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SF, UK, NI, OAU

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN REACTION TO SALE OF WASP

1. NIGERIAN PRESS HAS IN LAST TWO DAYS EDITORIALIZED ON BRITISH SALE OF WASP HELICOPTERS TO SOUTH AFRICA IN WAKE OF LAST WEEK'S GUARDIAN ARTICLE ANNOUNCING THAT BRITAIN INTENDED TO SEND FOUR HELICOPTERS TO SOUTH AFRICA IN EXECUTION OF 1971 AGREEMENT.

2. LOCAL EDITORIALS HAVE CONTENDED THAT CURRENT SALE AMOUNTS TO COMPLETE DISREGARD OF NIGERIA'S POSITION AND HAVE CALLED FOR REVIEW OF NIGERIA'S DIPLOMATIC, ECONOMIC AND TRADE RELATIONS WITH UK. WHEN ASKED AT PRESS CONFERENCE, DEC. 5 WHAT NIGERIA'S ATTITUDE WOULD BE CONCERNING SALE, GOWON DECLARED THAT NIGERIA WOULD NOT BREAK DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH BRITAIN, STATING "IF WE CONTINUE TO BREAK DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH VARIOUS COUNTRIES ON ALL MATTERS WE SHALL AT THE END HAVE NO RELATIONS WITH ANY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD." HE FURTHER SAID THAT OAU WOULD TAKE NECESSARY STEPS TO STOP BRITISH ARMS SALE TO SOUTH AFRICA, BUT DID NOT REVEAL WHAT STEPS WOULD BE.

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PAGE 02 LAGOS 09724 061723Z

3. COMMENT: GOWON STATEMENT CLEARLY SUGGESTS THAT HE QUESTIONS WISDOM AND EFFICACY OF USING RUPTURE IN RELATIONS AS MEANS OF DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE (AND INDEED THAT HE HAD DOUBTS OVER NIGERIA'S BREAK WITH ISRAEL). IT DOUBTFUL THAT HE WILL REVERSE HIS POSITION WITH RESPECT TO UK, SINCE HE APPARENTLY SEES MAINTENANCE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AS MOST EFFECTIVE CHANNEL TO INFLUENCE POLICY. IT EQUALLY DOUBTFUL THAT FMG WILL TAKE ANY ACTION AGAINST THE UK THAT WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO NIGERIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS AND BOTH WE AND BRITISH HERE TEND TO RULE OUT POSSIBILITY OF NIGERIA IMPOSING OIL EMBARGO AGAINST THE UK.

4. BRITISH EXPECT CURRENT SPATE OF ARTICLES ON SALE OF WASPS TO DIE DOWN WITH NO ACTION TAKEN AS WAS CASE WHEN ORIGINAL SALE WAS ANNOUNCED TWO YEARS AGO. RE POSSIBLE OAU ACTION, UK HICOM HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT BEING CONSIDERED BUT SPECULATES STEPS INVISAGED BY GOWON MAY BE CONTAINED IN OVERALL REVIEW WHICH THEY UNDERSTAND OAU MAKING RE SALES OF ARMS TO SOUTHERN AFRICA.  
REINHARDT

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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